

**Resolution #7 2007 Submitted by Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH MT**  
**Subject: Off Road Vehicle Reform**

Resolution  
PASSED

2007

WHEREAS, The Back Country Horsemen of Montana (BCHM) was formed in January of 1973 with a three-fold PURPOSE: service to the back country, education of horsemen, and representation in land use planning and management. In order to preserve the integrity of the back country we love so well, we as Back Country Horsemen, must step forward and take a firm and outspoken stand on Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Reform; and

WHEREAS, The Back Country Horsemen of Montana and the Montana Wilderness Association have signed a memorandum of understanding generalizing the concern of expanding ORV use and its threat to our national forests and also to our mission to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country; and

WHEREAS, The Back Country Horsemen of Montana and the Montana Wilderness Association have agreed and pledged that the first step for restoring wise management is to set effective and responsible limits to off-road vehicle driving that will safeguard wilderness, primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized areas and quiet mountain trails; and

WHEREAS, At the Chief's direction, National Forests are implementing the Travel Management Rule to end widespread cross-country vehicle travel and instead designate roads, routes and areas suitable for travel and motorized recreation by 4X4's, ATVs and dirt bikes; and

WHEREAS, Opportunities for foot and hoof travel, active recreation and conservation of healthy habitat will largely be determined by where off-road vehicles are not allowed; and

WHEREAS, Land management agencies often complain that they cannot effectively monitor and enforce route and area designations, creating the false sense among off-road vehicle users that they can ride off-route; and

WHEREAS, The Travel Management Rule directs land managers to "consider...the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration [of designated routes and areas]"; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Back Country Horsemen of Montana support the following recommendations:

1. Designate roads and routes for off-road vehicle travel through both site-specific and landscape analysis and public comment under the National Environmental Policy Act. Renegade roads/routes created by users without authorization will be closed until full analysis is completed to determine whether they can be designated without endangering forest health, environmental values, public safety and/or the experience of other users. Renegade roads/routes that will be permanently closed must be restored and,
2. Protect traditional foot/horse trails from motorized use: ORVs may only travel on roads and ORV routes designated in a public planning process and engineered for motorized travel and,

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3. Authorize off-road vehicle use only in a manner that protects natural resources, environmental values (e.g. quiet, landscape character), public safety and the experience of other forest users and,
4. Authorize off-road vehicle use only on those routes that the agency can afford to monitor, enforce and maintain and,
5. Prohibit the use of off-road vehicles in wilderness quality lands such as roadless/unroaded areas, wilderness study areas and proposed wilderness study areas as well as areas where motorized use has or likely will create conflicts with traditional pack and saddle use and,
6. Review any proposals put forth by BCHM or affiliated chapters to reclaim pack and saddle trails (e.g. those that have been trespassed on by off-road vehicles and subsequently abandoned by horsemen) with the intention to build, re-build or convert from roads to pack & saddle trails and,
7. Create a consistent set of minimum off-road vehicle enforcement, monitoring and maintenance standards that all National Forests must meet, while allowing individual forests to develop or maintain more protective measures and,
8. Forests should adopt a stopgap enforcement strategy that puts responsibility for lawful driving and riding on the individual. Specifically, we recommend that forests establish an "unauthorized use threshold" for all routes. Once the unauthorized use threshold is reached, the route or area would be permanently or provisionally closed to motor vehicle use. For example, should riders stray more than once from a stable route that is near a sensitive wetland, the agency should indefinitely deny future motorized use of the route. An unauthorized use threshold would provide riders incentive to follow the rules, and would create an incentive for self-policing among riders; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be sent to: BCHA, USDA, Region 1 FS, MT FWP Director M. Jeff Hagener, MT. FWP Commission Chair Steve Doherty, MT Dept. of Environmental Quality, MT Dept. of Natural Resources, BLM, Senator Max Baucus, Senator Jon Tester, Governor Brian Schweitzer, Rep. Dennis Rehberg, County Commissioners and any other appropriate agencies.

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